

Foreign Language Textbook Activities: Keeping Pace with Second Language Acquisition Research

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Abstract: *Recent research in second language acquisition found that learners reached higher levels of achievement when grammar practice included the processing and negotiation of meaning. This study explored the degree to which certain textbook activities reflected the earlier findings. A typology of production activities — based on the degree to which the activities required learners to process meaning — was established. The activities for two grammar points from selected Italian elementary language textbooks were classified according to this typology, ultimately demonstrating that Italian texts still rely heavily on traditional, mechanical activities to practice certain structures. The study produced a typology of activities and an assessment procedure that can be used to determine how well foreign language textbook activities have kept pace with research in second language acquisition.*

Introduction

In Italian, grammar and grammar teaching traditionally have been and continue to be a primary focus for foreign language instructors and students. Aski (2001) reported that in a recent survey of Italian instructors from 19 institutions in North America, 79% rated comprehensive grammar explanations highly¹ as an important element in language textbooks, with the majority of this group (68%) assigning them maximum importance. In a parallel survey of 76 undergraduate students in the elementary Italian language sequence at The Ohio State University (Aski, 2001), 75% also assigned a high score to comprehensive grammar explanations; when asked to rate the importance of teaching grammar in Italian language courses, 92% assigned a high rating.

While concern over grammar has generated theoretical and empirical studies of how grammar should be taught, there have been relatively few analyses of grammar practice activities (Ellis, 2002).² This article investigates the nature of textbook activities in light of research in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), which has revealed that learners reach higher levels of foreign language achievement if grammar instruction and practice includes an exploration of meaning and communicative practice. A typology of production activities that is based on the degree to which learners are required to process and negotiate meaning is also presented. These activities range from mechanical exercises that manipulate forms but require no meaning to be processed, to the most communicative type, in which the primary goal is to generate original and meaningful exchanges.³ This is followed by an analysis and categorization of the activities for two grammar points from seven Italian elementary language texts (listed in Appendix A).

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Research in Second Language Acquisition

Larsen-Freeman (1995) pointed out that students in French full-immersion programs, which are input-rich environments without formal instruction, obtained comprehension and communicative fluency, but that their language tended to lack grammatical accuracy. This led her to conclude that "... the acknowledged weakness of immersion education can be overcome by selective form-focused instruction" (p.137–138). Studies in SLA have also determined that grammar instruction can be beneficial. Ellis (1995) stated that "[l]earners who receive formal instruction outperform those who do not; that is, they learn more rapidly and they reach higher levels of ultimate achievement" (p.171). However, Ellis asked how these levels of achievement were obtained despite the fact that instruction does not appear to intervene in the natural processes of language development. That is, learners have systematic and predictable stages of acquisition, and instruction cannot change these stages.

As a solution to this paradox, Ellis suggested that explicit knowledge (through instruction) acts as a facilitator of implicit knowledge by making the learner conscious of particular linguistic features in the input. In a similar vein, Lightbown (1998) examined students who received instruction on structures beyond their developmental stage, yet showed improvements. She suggested that these linguistic gains were due to the fact that students learn structures as memorized chunks that are not integrated into the interlanguage system, but play an important role by serving as input to the learner's own system. So students acquire "knowledge" of these features, but only gain "control" of them when they have opportunities to use them in discourse-appropriate contexts. Thus, form-focused instruction can ultimately increase the rate of the learning process, even though it does not affect the route (Lightbown, 1998; Musumeci, 2001).

The relationship between formal instruction and meaningful, communicative tasks has acquired a prominent role in SLA research and pedagogy. Lightbown and Spada's (1993) review of classroom SLA research led them to conclude that "[e]xperience has also shown that primarily or exclusively grammar-based approaches to teaching do not guarantee that learners develop high levels of accuracy and linguistic knowledge ... The results from these studies support the claim that learners require opportunities for communicative practice" (p. 83). Moreover, Larsen-Freeman (1995) highlighted the connection between grammar and meaning when she stated that "[g]rammatical structures are more than forms; therefore their acquisition must entail more than learning how to form the structures. It must also include learning what they mean and when and why to use them as well" (p. 133). Chaudron (2001) reviewed articles in the *Modern Language Journal* and

reported that in the 1980s there was an explosion of research on language learning via interaction with learners on specific communicative tasks. In the mid-1980s, VanPatten performed experimental studies on input processing, which is one type of input-based pedagogical approach that focuses on processing form–meaning connections. The topic that took hold in 1990s SLA research was tasks and their impact on language learning.

Research supporting meaningful, communicative practice is paralleled by growing evidence against the value of tasks that involve manipulation of forms without attention to meaning (i.e., mechanical drills). Wong and VanPatten (in press) reviewed both early and contemporary studies that challenge the contribution of drills to language acquisition and performance over time, and concluded that there is sufficient evidence to discard these activities altogether.⁴

The relationship between structure and meaning has also been a priority among reviewers of textbooks, who have found continued dependence on form-focused activities and relatively little communicative practice. Shelly (1995) examined eight elementary French textbooks in which grammar was presented traditionally and argued for a more holistic approach. Similarly, Mitchell, Tucker and Redmond's (1993) investigation of several French intermediate texts revealed an abundance of mechanical, form-manipulation activities, but "limited practice of the skills in meaningful contexts and few opportunities for students to extend their understanding in order to express their own ideas" (p. 13). Frantzen (1998) made similar observations for Spanish textbooks, as did Takenoya (1995) for Japanese textbooks. Ellis (2002), in a review of the exercises in six ESL/EFL grammar practice books, found most to rely on production; he asserted that "... materials writers have typically neglected a number of methodological options that SLA theory and research suggest may be effective in promoting L2 acquisition" (p. 171). Similarly, Lally (1998) found that despite recommendations in the late 1980s for more communicative activities and SLA research throughout the 1990s that supported these recommendations, drill activities in French textbooks "... still constitute a substantial proportion of textbook activities" (p. 311).

SLA research has pointed to meaning as the operative feature in language acquisition, and recent pedagogical approaches have taken steps to incorporate meaning into grammar instruction and practice. At the same time, analyses of textbooks have shown that meaning, context, and function continue to take a back seat to traditional presentations and practice of grammar. This curious disjunction between theory and practice may be related to methodologists' reluctance to abandon form-manipulation activities. Wong and VanPatten (in press) reported that despite the advent of communicative language teaching, structural pattern practice continues to be advocated in methodology

texts as a necessary prerequisite to activities that expect learners to express their own thoughts, feelings, and reactions. According to Musumeci (1997), in order for theory to equal practice, there must be a decisive change in the beliefs of instructors. However, this change is hindered as long as methodologists continue to advocate the use of activities whose effectiveness is not supported by the research.

The next sections investigate how grammar is practiced in a selection of Italian elementary textbooks. A typology of activities was devised to describe the amount of meaning students are required to process, and then the types of activities most frequently utilized were assessed according to this typology. The results show that the types of language practice employed in Italian textbooks lag behind the findings and recommendations of SLA research.

Form and Meaning in Foreign Language Textbook Activities

A Typology of Textbook Activities

SLA research has revealed that learners must have ample opportunity to negotiate meaning during language practice. In order to examine textbook exercises and the amount of meaning learners are required to process, a typology of activities must be established to ensure consistent classification. Lee and VanPatten (1995) discussed Paulston's (1972) traditional classification of activities as *mechanical drill* (MechD), *meaningful drill* (MeanD), or *communicative drill* (CD). This classification was based on: degree of learner control over the response; whether there is one correct answer; whether participants already know the answer; and whether they need to understand what is being said to successfully complete the drill. These activity types will be described in the following sections, along with a fourth category, communicative language practice (CLP). This last category accommodates activities that do not involve formulaic patterns and have as a primary focus the creation of meaningful interactions that foster communication, thus reflecting the modifications in methodology recommended by SLA research.

These four categories are points on a continuum of activity types that range from the most mechanical, in which the learner simply manipulates forms without any regard for meaning, to the most communicative, in which the main thrust of the exercise is to generate meaning in context.

Mechanical drills

In a mechanical drill, learners do not have to understand the prompt; they need only substitute or manipulate forms, and there is only one correct response. Thus, the focus is exclusively on form. Typical examples of mechanical drills

are pattern practice, transformations, and substitutions. These activities are often completed individually, but the following examples⁵ demonstrate how they can also be executed in pairs. In these mechanical pair exchanges students are given all the elements necessary for creating the questions and answers and need only follow the model to successfully complete the activities.

- (1) What will they do after university? Ask and answer.

Example:

Mario / andare in America (*Mark / to go to America*)

S1: Cosa farà Mario dopo l'università? (*What will Mark do after university?*)

S2: Andrà in America. (*He will go to America.*) (Pease & Bini, 1993, p. 225)

- (2) Tomorrow! With a partner, complete the following exercises according to the model.

Example:

S1: cosa / comprare / tua sorella (*what / to buy / your sister*)

S2: mia sorella / comprare / un vestito nuovo (*my sister / to buy / a new dress*)

S1: Cosa comprerà tua sorella domani? (*What will your sister buy tomorrow?*)

S2: Mia sorella comprerà un vestito nuovo. (*She will buy a new dress.*) (Danesi, 1997, p. 290)

Regardless of whether the mechanical drill is performed individually or in pairs, the language learner need not understand the meaning of the utterance provided or produced to successfully complete the activity. The structure of the answers is highly controlled and the main goal of the activity is to produce the correct form.

Meaningful drills

According to Paulston (1972), meaningful drills differ from mechanical drills in that the learner must understand the meanings of the stimulus (input) and the answer (output). However, as in mechanical drills, there is only one correct answer. These are not authentic communicative interactions because students do not generate and negotiate their own meaning in original constructions. Typical examples include pair work in which students ask and answer questions based on given information. All participants know the correct answer and no new information is being exchanged. At the same time, however, these activities are not purely mechanical drills:

- (3) Prices in Europe. Observe the table of European prices of a variety of products and ask your partner questions.

Example:

S1: Quanto costa il televisore Sony in Italia? (*How much is a Sony television in Italy?*)

S2: Costa novecentonovantamila lire. (*It costs*

990,000 Lire.) (Lazzarino, Aski, Dini, & Peccianti, 2000, p. 175)

- (4) Everyone speaks! Now describe how the person sitting near you is dressed.

Example:

Barbara porta una bellissima maglia arancione, una camicetta bianca ... (*Barbara is wearing a beautiful orange sweater, a white blouse ...*) (Danesi, 1997, p. 227).

Meaningful drills can also include highly structured, fill-in-the-blank exercises in which the learner must understand the context and the meanings of the appropriate prepositions:

- (5) Where are you going? Complete with the appropriate simple or articulated preposition for each case.

Oggi io vado _____ università e Marta va _____ mercato. (*Today I am going _____ university and Marta is going _____ market.*) (Pease & Bini 1993, p.133)

Also included in this category are verb pool exercises; activities in which students must combine phrases from multiple columns in order to create coherent sentences; fill-in-the-blank exercises requiring the correct tense/aspect/mood of a verb (e.g., choosing present perfect vs. imperfect); and dialogue completions (e.g., supplying questions appropriate for given answers).

Translation exercises are in this category as well, since learners must understand the meanings of the terms to carry out the task and there is only one correct answer. However, these activities remain near the mechanical end of the spectrum, since the primary focus is proper translation of the forms:

- (6) Do you want to go to the cinema? Now, with a partner, create brief phone conversations; follow the model and modify it as you see fit.

Example:

S1: [Call your friend, saying the number out loud.]

S2: [Answer and ask who's there.] etc. (Danesi, 1997, p. 131)

Communicative drills

The main difference between meaningful and communicative drills is the nature of the responses produced. Unlike meaningful activities, for which there is one correct answer known to all participants, the response of a communicative drill contains information that is new and unknown to the person presenting the prompt, so there is no right or wrong answer. However, like meaningful drills, communicative drills share a formulaic and highly structured format. Part of the activity is prompted, but the rest is left to the personal opinion and creativity of the students:

- (7) When were you born? Following the model, ask your partner ...

Example:

quando è nato/a? (*when he or she was born?*)

S1: Quando sei nato/a? (*When were you born?*)

S2: Sono nato/a il 15 settembre. (*I was born September 15th.*) (Danesi, 1997, p. 320)

- (8) Interview. Use the following expressions to ask a classmate questions using the conditional (and the formal or informal form). Observe the example, but form original questions and answers.

Example:

abitare a Roma o a Bologna (*to live in Rome or Bologna*)

S1: Preferiresti abitare a Roma o a Bologna? (*Would you prefer to live in Rome or Bologna?*)

S2: Preferirei abitare a Bologna perché Roma è una città molto cara. (*I would prefer to live in Bologna because Rome is a very expensive city.*) (Speroni, Golino, & Caiti 1993, p. 278)

According to Lee and VanPatten (1995), a typical example of a communicative drill is a yes/no question. These authors reasoned that meaning must be processed as the learner responds affirmatively or negatively to the personal information:

- (9) In pairs: Ask a friend if he or she has the following things. If the response is yes, ask if the objects are pretty.

Example:

orologio (*watch*)

S1: Hai un orologio? (*Do you have a watch?*)

S2: Sì, ho un orologio. (*Yes, I have a watch.*)

S1: È bello l'orologio? (*Is it a pretty watch?*)

S2: Sì, è un bell'orologio. (*Yes, it is a pretty watch.*) (Merlonghi, Merlonghi, Tursi, & O'Connor, 1998, p. 117)

- (10) Ask and answer with a partner substituting the indicated words with a pronoun.

Example:

S1: Ascolti il professore? (*Do you listen to the professor?*)

S2: Sì, l'ascolto (lo). (No, non l'ascolto.) (*Yes, I listen to him. No I don't listen to him.*) (Pease & Bini, 1993, p. 151)

Assuming that students respond truthfully, they must process meaning in order to give an affirmative or negative response. However, these activities are highly formulaic with a strong emphasis on form. The only new information is the yes/no response. There is a close relationship between these examples and the mechanical drills described above. For example, the only difference between example 10 and

a mechanical pronoun substitution drill is that the former has a yes/no, question/answer format, while the latter is a transformation exercise. On a continuum ranging from mechanical drill to communicative drill, yes/no questions fall closer to the mechanical end.

Communicative drills also include activities that attempt to stimulate discussion by providing a set of contrived, disjointed questions, the topics of which are often of little interest to the students. The goal is to practice a particular grammatical structure, although new information is produced in the answers. However, students are more likely to focus on responding with the correct grammatical form than on giving truthful answers. As such, these drills also are near the mechanical/meaningful end of the spectrum. The following example is taken from a section on productive suffixes:

(11) Conversation.

Di solito scrivi letterine o letterone? Hai mai ricevuto una letteraccia? Da chi? Per quale motivo (reason)? (*Do you usually write short or long letters? Have you ever received a nasty letter? From whom? For what reason?*) (Lazzarino et al., 2000, p.198)

Communicative language practice

Lee and VanPatten (1995) reported that several researchers found that students quickly understood the purpose of meaningful and communicative drills, which was to practice a particular grammar point, and they often ignored the meaningful content in order to focus on form.⁶ Communicative language practice, the last category in this typology, moves beyond the formulaic nature of the mechanical, meaningful, and communicative drills. Instead, it requires, first and foremost, attention to meaning in order to generate form. It is not possible to answer randomly and there is no pattern to follow. The goal is to immerse the learner in a meaningful context in which he or she is motivated to interact. Typical examples are task-based, information gap, and role playing activities that give learners the opportunity to negotiate meaning. Learners generate the situation in which they interact freely:

(12) Awards. Today we celebrate the people and artistic works that we consider the most notable of the year. With a partner, prepare a list of categories. Then, with the whole class, nominate five candidates for each category and vote for your favorites.

Example:

un premio per il film più interessante, l'attrice più brava e la persona più generosa (*an award for the most interesting film, the best actress and the most generous person*) (Lazzarino et al., 2000, p. 215)

(13) Creative moment! Working in pairs, choose a famous person. Each pair will then describe that person to the other class members, who must try to guess

who it is, asking no more than five questions. (Danesi, 1997, p. 140)

(14) At the restaurant. You are at a restaurant with some friends. One at a time everyone orders from the menu. One student plays the part of the waiter/waitress. (Speroni et al., 1993, p. 280)

In the following examples, students are given sample topics for discussion, but they must generate the rest of the ideas, examples, questions, and answers on their own:

(15) Two worlds compared. With another student, discuss the differences between the eating practices in Italy and the United States. Try to use the *si impersonale* (the impersonal form) when appropriate. Some possible topics are:

– differenze di orario (in America si mangia la cena alle ...) (*differences in schedule: In America one eats at ...*)

– differenze nei pasti (in Italia si consuma un pranzo abbondante che consiste in ...) (*differences in meals: In Italy one has a large lunch which consists of ...*) (Branciforte & Grassi, 2002, p. 200)

(16) In pairs: Interview another student to find out two things *che non fa mai* (*that he or she never does*), *che non fa più* (*that he or she doesn't do anymore*), *che non ha mai fatto ma che vuole fare* (*that he or she never did but would like to do.*) (Merlonghi et al., 1998, p. 214)

Often, but not always, the activity is carried out for a purpose, such as to discover a secret, find information and share it with others, exchange opinions, or play roles, and is performed in pairs or groups. Some activities that may be classified as communicative language practice can be carried out individually, as follows:

(17) We are all athletic. Complete in a logical manner.

Non siamo andati alla partita domenica scorsa perché ... (*We didn't go to the game on Sunday because ...*) (Branciforte & Grassi, 1998, p. 223)

(18) Hypotheses and conclusions. For each phrase, formulate a hypothesis or a conclusion using the verbs *potere* "can" and *dovere* "must" in the present tense. Try to be original.

Example:

L'autobus non arriva. (*The bus isn't arriving.*) →
Possiamo andare a piedi o prendere un tassì. (*We can walk or take a bus.*)

Example:

Mario va al lavoro alle sei. (*Mario goes to work at six.*) →

Si deve sempre alzare presto allora. (*He always has to get up early.*) (Speroni et al., 1993, p. 144)

However, on the continuum between communicative drills and communicative language practice, the preceding

exercises fall closer to the former, since the responses are structured and, as in example 18, can be on disjointed topics. The degree to which these activities become communicative language practice in the classroom setting depends on the instructor's ability to expand and enhance discussion about the items.

An Assessment of Italian

Elementary Textbook Activities

SLA research has highlighted the importance of communi-

cation and the negotiation of meaning in the acquisition process. The typology of activities described in the previous section is a continuum of the degree to which learners must process meaning in order to complete activities successfully, from the most form-focused, mechanical exercises to activities that create opportunities to interpret and express real-life/meaningful messages, negotiate meaning, and exchange information. The activities accompanying two grammatical structures (the verb *piacere* "to be pleasing to" and the *passato prossimo* "present perfect" construc-

Table 1

NUMBERS OF ACTIVITIES FOR PRACTICING THE *PIACERE* STRUCTURE, BY TYPE

Piacere	MechD	MeanD	CD	CLP	Total
<i>Adesso</i>	3		5 (5 yes/no)		8
<i>Basic Italian</i>	1		2 (2 yes/no)		3
<i>Ciao!</i>	2		5 (2 yes/no)	1	8
<i>Italiano in Diretta</i>	1	1	3 (2 yes/no)		5
<i>Oggi in Italia</i>		2	3 (3 yes/no)	2	7
<i>Parliamo Italiano</i>		1	2 (2 yes/no)	1	4
<i>Prego!</i>	4	1	1 (0 yes/no)	2	8
Total	11	5	21	6	43

Mech D = mechanical drill

MeanD = meaningful drill

CD = communicative drill

CLP = communicative language practice

Table 2

NUMBERS OF ACTIVITIES FOR PRACTICING THE *PASSATO PROSSIMO*, BY TYPE

Passato Prossimo	MechD	MeanD	CD	CLP	Total
<i>Adesso</i>	8		2		10
<i>Basic Italian</i>	6		2		7
<i>Ciao!</i>	6	3	2		11
<i>Italiano in Diretta</i>	5		3		8
<i>Oggi in Italia</i>	5	5	5	1	16
<i>Parliamo Italiano</i>	2	2	1		5
<i>Prego!</i>	6	2	2	1	11
Total	38	12	17	2	69

Mech D = mechanical drill

MeanD = meaningful drill

CD = communicative drill

CLP = communicative language practice

tion⁸) in seven elementary Italian textbooks (Appendix A) were analyzed to determine which activity types predominated. The texts were analyzed and categorized as to their focus on meaning rather than on form. Tables 1 and 2 show the number of mechanical, meaningful, and communicative drills, and the communicative language practice exercises, provided for the two structures, respectively.

The most glaring result of the two analyses is that very few communicative language practice activities were used for either grammar point: six of 43 (14%) *piacere* and only two of 69 (3%) *passato prossimo* activities fell into this category. In contrast, approximately half of all *passato prossimo* activities (55%) and 26% of *piacere* activities were mechanical drills. Communicative drills (49%) were the most frequent activity employed for practicing *piacere*; only 25% of the *passato prossimo* activities were communicative drills.

The preponderance of communicative drills for *piacere* may be due to the fact that many of these activities are of the yes/no type, as in this example:

(19) What do you like? Ask and answer among yourselves.

Example:

il rock and roll

S1: Ti piace il rock and roll? (*Do you like rock and roll?*)

S2: Sì, mi piace. (No, non mi piace.) (*Yes, I like it. No, I don't like it.*) (Paese & Bini, 1993, p. 209)

As pointed out earlier, although they are categorized as communicative drills, these yes/no activities are highly formulaic and their patterns are easily reproduced (and even memorized), making them more similar to mechanical drills. Thus, the activities cannot be classified as “communicative” overall, because the yes/no exchange is among the most formulaic and predictable of communicative drills, and, in this case, learners could memorize the correct forms as linguistic strings.

This examination of Italian texts revealed that the number of communicative language practice activities fell far short of the other activity types.⁹ Moreover, the books relied heavily on the least communicative activity type, mechanical drills, to practice certain structures, such as the *passato prossimo*. These results are supported by Antenos-Conforti's (2001) examination of nine elementary Italian textbooks used in Canada (five of which are examined here). She stated that “[f]or all the texts, fill-in-the-blank, question/answer and transformation exercises constitute more than fifty percent (50%) of the L2 learner's practice ... [T]he traditional exercises maintain a stronghold on the practice and reinforcement of grammatical points.”

This study has demonstrated the lag between SLA research that supports activities in which students are

forced to process meaning, and current textbook activities, which continue to employ pattern practice. Moreover, Italian language textbooks are not alone in this incongruity. In fact, Wong and VanPatten stated: “one can open just about any textbook at the secondary or college-level and turn to a section that introduces a grammar point. What one finds is explanation ... followed immediately by pattern practice, however brief or long this phase may be. Workbook and lab manuals contain similar activities.”

This disparity between theory and practice appears to be perpetuated by textbook publishers. However, publishers produce the materials that are requested by their audience: foreign language instructors. Therefore, as pointed out by Musumeci (1997), change can occur only if the views of instructors are modified in such a way that they understand and embrace the findings of SLA research, and indicate a preference for materials that reflect these findings.

Concluding Remarks

The typology of production activities presented in this article provides points of reference along a continuum, in which the operative feature of classification is the degree of meaning processed and negotiated. The assessment of activities for two grammar points in a selection of Italian texts suggests that the activities for all grammar points will rate differently, depending on the degree to which they lend themselves to interactive production as well as the underlying philosophy of the text.

This typology and assessment procedure can be used to determine how well foreign language textbooks are keeping pace with SLA research, which calls for meaningful, communicative language practice and a decisive move away from form-manipulation exercises. The assessment of Italian activities demonstrates that Italian textbooks are not keeping up with these recommendations, as is true for textbooks of other foreign languages. The most effective way to bring practice into line with theory is to modify instructors' views by informing them of advances in our understanding of the SLA process. Once instructors embrace recommended methods and strategies, they will request the materials that employ them, and practice will more closely reflect the theories generated by SLA research.

Acknowledgments

Many thanks to Prof. Linda Harlow and the anonymous readers for their insightful comments and suggestions. Any and all errors are my own.

Notes

1. Rating was based on a scale of 1 to 10. A score of 8 to 10 was considered “high.”

2. VanPatten (1997) also highlighted a lacuna in the research on the types of activities used in classrooms. However, there is a growing field of materials analysis. For example, see Terrell (1990), Young (1999), Young and Oxford (1993), and Hague and Scott (1994) for Spanish; Gratton (2000), Lepetit (2001), and Segermann (2000) for French; Wahba (1997) for German; Ning (2001) for Chinese; Parry (2000) for Japanese; Freedel (2000) for Russian; and Millard (2000) for ESL.

3. Since the majority of grammar practice activities in Italian elementary language textbooks are production-based, the resulting typology is limited to output/production activities. Factors that influence classification have been limited to the degree to which meaning is processed and negotiated.

4. An important consequence of these results is ultimately modification of the well established methodological progression of activities from mechanical to meaningful to communicative.

5. All examples are taken from the textbooks listed in Appendix A. The direction lines have been translated into English, while the examples remain in Italian but are accompanied by English glosses. The formatting of the activities has been standardized for the reader's convenience.

6. To overcome these shortcomings, Lee and VanPatten (1995) suggest structured output activities, which would be classified as CLP in the present typology. However, their structured nature would place them closer to CD on the typological continuum.

7. Students have much difficulty acquiring the *piacere* construction, which is similar to French *plaire*, German *gefallen* and Spanish *gustar*. Instead of being parallel to the frequent "I like X" construction in English, it is the equivalent of "X is pleasing to me," employing a subject (the admired object) and indirect object (the person who is pleased). While most texts discuss the present and present perfect tenses of *piacere*, Speroni et al. (1993) and Branciforte & Grassi (2002) provide only the present tense. Moreover, Speroni et al. (1993) present only constructions with first and second person (formal and informal) indirect object pronouns.

8. In Italian, the present perfect is constructed with an auxiliary (either *avere* "have" or *essere* "be") and a past participle. Constructions with both auxiliaries are included in the analysis.

9. Although SLA research advocates activities in which meaning is processed, I am unaware of research that demonstrates how many CLP activities are needed for each grammar point.

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Appendix A: Italian Texts Examined to Create the Typology

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